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A

DISSUASIVE

From ENTERING into

HOLY ORDERS,

IN A

LETTER to a Young Gentleman, &c.



L O N D O N:

Printed for H. Cook, in *Fleetstreet*,

MDCCXXXII.

DISPOSITIVE

NOT ORDERS



MDCCXXII



S I R,

THE last Letter I received from you, acquainted me with your Design of going into Holy Orders, which, I hope, is not yet put in execution; and, if you will be persuaded by me, it never shall— You may be surpriz'd at this Expression, especially when I tell you, that I am now from my Heart serious in it. I think verily, that hitherto, during the course of our Friendship, you have never had any reason to suspect my Concern for your Welfare: My Advice, Interest, and every Service in my power, have always been at your command; and from what you have experienced, I assure my self, that you are fully convinced, that in all things

I consult your Advantage. But I must tell you, I expect no deference to my Opinions, merely from that Willingness and Inclination I have always shown to promote your Affairs; but wholly and solely to the Goodness and Sufficiency of the Reasons I lay before you, why I would not have you undertake the Sacred Employment; which I shall proceed without any further Ceremony to offer to your Consideration: only if you can refute any thing which I alledge, do so by all means; good Reasons should of course give way to better; and believe me, that I have such a value for you, as earnestly to desire to have your Conduct regulated by the best.

1. In the first place then, I cannot see the absolute Necessity of the Office, as far as it relates to Preaching; being of Opinion, that preaching the Gospel does not consist in making Sermons, or explaining Texts —

This

This is indeed now the chief, as well as the most gainful Branch of the Ministerial Duty; and if a Man has the Happiness of a clean Delivery, or a good Knack, as some People call it, he rarely fails of making his Fortune in the Church. But the Business seems to me to be superseded by the Publication of the Gospels and Epistles. After these were written and dispers'd abroad, the Evangelists Part was perform'd, where they were receiv'd, and so ceased of course.—To preach the Gospel in the scriptural Sense, is, to acquaint the World that Christ is come, and the Purposes he came for— This Affair needs not many Words, is very plainly told by the Writers of the New Testament, the meanest Understanding may comprehend 'em — Where this is known, enough is known.— We stand in no want of such a number of Preachers, Lecturers, &c. The Divine Authors are either plain and perspicuous, or not— If they are

not so, to what end were they written ?
 If they are, to what purpose such multitudes of licenced Interpreters? —
 Here is no need of you — We are already stock'd with Persons enough, whose only Business it is to tell us the same thing over and over again — It would be better if it were not done with such great Uncertainty and Variation — In short, 'tis just, as one says, *as if a*
“ Husband-man should once tell his
“ Servants what they are to do, when
“ to sow, when to reap ; and after-
“ wards one should come and tell
“ them, twice or thrice a Day, what
“ they know already — You must sow
*“ your Wheat in *October* — You must*
*“ reap your Wheat in *August*.”*

2. But should I in the next place allow that the Office may perhaps be of some service to Mankind, especially to the Illiterate, and such as cannot read — Nevertheless, as the Negligence of the Ordainers is such, and
 their

their Enquiries into the Qualifications of the young Persons they suffer to be admitted into the Ministry, so trivial, and very superficial ; I am much afraid it may appear to have more bad than good Consequences— What raw, indigested Stuff have I not heard from Pulpits? What absurd Expression! Quaint Metaphor! and monstrous Violation of the Sacred Text! What pains have I seen several Persons take, (and those not always young Clergymen neither, but sometimes such as have been in Orders some Years, and beneficed too in this Town) I say what pains have I seen them take, to misquote and misapply Passages from sacred Scripture, thro' a long heavy Discourse; the major part of which has been nothing to the purpose?

NAY, this is far from being the worst of the Case—I have not only heard, very frequently, very bad Language, much Inconsistency, Scripture put to the rack—

But

*But that's no News to the poor in-
jur'd Page,*

*It has been us'd as ill in every Age—
And is constrain'd with Patience all
to take,*

*For what Defence can Greek and He-
brew make ?* Dryden.

I HAVE not only been Witness to all this—but to my Surprize and Astonishment, have heard Positive Duties prefer'd to those of Moral and Eternal Obligation—Trifles made necessary Terms of Salvation — These wrong explain'd, and clogg'd with the Accession of very dubious, very uncertain Points — And lastly, the Doctrines of Men more strongly and vehemently insisted on, than the Commandments of God.

HENCE of course the People, whose Souls are committed to such Instructors, are sure to be confirmed in Ignorance,

norance, Bigotry and Superstition—
 The Misfortune is, these Creatures are
 not a few neither, and generally the
 most conceited and most forward—
 You will always find such the most
 noisy, and most blustering; whilst the
 truly learned are ever modest and
 diffident— And the wordy bullying
 Pretensions of the former, seldom fail
 of taking the Vulgar— Whilst the real
 Merit, and just Sense of the latter,
 will only have effect upon such as
 themselves.

HENCE too, from the Ignorance
 and Bigotry of the Clergy, springs what
 they call *Heresy*; which is indeed, ge-
 nerally speaking, only another Word
 for *Truth*. For as their Ignorance
 makes them Bigots, so their Bigotry
 chains them down to Ignorance; by
 which means they are sure to move
 perpetually in this dark Circle. And
 when any Man of Sense, either of
 their own Function, or among the
 Laity,

Laity, speaks or writes in Defence of Truth, and sound Religion, he is sure to be honour'd with the Title of *Heretick*. They would go farther, if their Hands were not tied up— for Persecution hath the same Origin likewise.

If you have a mind to see the Genealogy on both sides, it's soon drawn for you :

<i>Ignorance,</i> <i>Bigotry,</i> <i>Superstition,</i> <i>Persecution.</i>	}	<i>Knowledge,</i> <i>Freedom,</i> <i>Modesty,</i> <i>Moderation.</i>
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So that, as I would not have you set up for a Preacher, because the Business is done to our hands ; so neither would I have you one, because there are too many already : I know your Ingenuity and good Parts, and am much afraid you would be apt to be in the right ; which, I am certain, is too dangerous a thing for a Man of your Fortune.

THAT

THAT I am not singular in this Sentiment, I could show from the Writings of some of the greatest Divines— But I shall content my self with two Passages from Bishop *Burnet*— In his Preface to the *Pastoral Care*, p. 15. he thus frankly acknowledges the matter ;
 “ And whereas the understanding of the
 “ Scripture, and an Application to
 “ that sacred Study, was at first the
 “ distinguishing Character of Protestants,
 “ for which they were generally nick-
 “ named *Gospellers* : These Holy Wri-
 “ tings are now so little studied, that
 “ such as are obliged to look narrowly
 “ into the matter, find great cause of
 “ Regret and Lamentation, from the
 “ gross Ignorance of such as either are
 “ in Orders, or that pretend to be put
 “ in them.”

AND again, the Body of his Book,
 p. 56— “ Men run to Orders as to a
 “ Subsistence, or the Means of pro-
 C “ curing

" curing it, and seem to have no other
 " Sense of that sacred Institution, than
 " Mechanicks have of obtaining their
 " Freedom, in that Trade or Company
 " in which they have passed their Ap-
 " prenticeship. It were indeed happy
 " for the Church, if those who offer
 " themselves for Orders, had but such
 " a Sense of them as Tradesmen have
 " of their Freedom; who do not pre-
 " tend to it till they have finished
 " the Time prescribed, and are in some
 " sort qualified to set up in it. —
 " Whereas, alas! Men who neither
 " know the Scripture, nor the Body
 " of Divinity, who have made no pro-
 " gress in their Studies, and can give
 " no tolerable account of that Holy
 " Doctrine, in which they desire to be
 " Teachers; do yet, with equal degrees
 " of Confidence and Importunity, pre-
 " tend to this Character, and find the
 " Way to it too easy, and the Access
 " of it too free."

3. But

3. **BUT** the preaching part does not only seem to me to be in a manner useless, very negligently provided for and worse performed; but another, and that a much more essential Branch of the Ministerial Duty, as at present managed, is far from being free from Objection—In Publick Forms of Prayer (as indeed in all publick Forms whatever) it is requisite some Person or Persons should have the chief Administration, and be the Mouth of the People.

BUT I am afraid, that upon examination we may find such things tack'd to our Liturgy, which may cause some judicious Persons to think, that the Words put into the Mouth of the People are turn'd either into Folly or Sin.

SOME don't stick to say, that it is an odd jumble of Devotion and

Creeds, and seems more designed to initiate us into the private Whims and Fancies of a few Divines, than to make us pious and humble before God— To what purpose else, say they, the three Creeds; one of which is— and — which nevertheless, by the tenor of it, you are oblig'd to believe under pain of Damnation— Another, the *Nicene*, hath been already the occasion of Tumult, Quarrel, Bloodshed, Schism and Persecution; and yet our wise Church-men have hoarded it up as a Jewel, and placed it in the most sacred part of the Office; as if no Man should be allowed to receive the Eucharist, who would not first swallow this bitter Pill— With the Apostle's Creed, most Parties, amongst Christians, are pretty well contented— It is modest, reserv'd, and less explicate— Men are left to their own Sentiments, and not forced to join in the Old Wives Fables, and Fairy Tales of Nurses and Monks.

NAY, they say roundly, that they can't perceive what occasion there is for any Creed at all in Offices of this Nature: Not why all Christians may not unite in Prayer, tho' differing in some particular Articles of Faith—When the Disciples ask'd our Saviour to teach them to pray, he did not require them to repeat their Belief—but dictated a plain Formulary, conceiv'd in proper Words, short, and suitable to human Wants.

It is supposed, that if we apply to God thro' Jesus Christ, with Humility, a Sensibility of our Necessities, and his Goodness, Willingness and Power to relieve us, that our Prayers will not be ineffectual—Nor can the most rigid among the Orthodox, take upon him to assert, that the Petitions of a well-disposed Heart, with the Qualifications just mention'd, will be rejected by God, tho' not so much as the Apostle's Creed were inserted in the Liturgy.

BUT it has ever been the Conduct of the Gown, to take hold of every Opportunity of making parties in Religion; by these means they are sure of finding some Zealots, and then the strongest side carries away all the Preferments. And it is something worth taking notice of, that amidst all the various Skirmishes, and Battlings which have happened among these Church-Militant Dragoons, no not the least Inclination towards an Overture has ever been shown by them, but they fight it out *usque ad Internecionem*. And it hath always been as dangerous to endeavour to part them, as to attempt the same between Man and Wife in their Matrimonial Squabbles, they both fall upon the Mediators, and knock them on the head—Thus the Passions of Men are kept up, and their Quarrels perpetuated from Age to Age: the strongest Party runs away with all the Benefices, divides the spoil among them—

themselves—— Claps a mark of Infamy on the opposite side, widens the Breach, and renders all Treaties absolutely impracticable.

I SAY therefore, in a few Words, that Beliefs, Doxologies, Articles of Faith, Private Senses of a few Churchmen, should never be dragged into Books of Publick Devotion—— they are only so many Watch-Words; and such Practices are more intended to excite our Zeal for them, and their Opinions, than to cherish proper Ideas of the Deity; to stir up the Spirit of Feud, Faction and Disturbance, than to promote that of Meekness, Peace and Piety.

AND if those who are in authority won't endeavour to destroy this Train which is laid for us of the Laity, we ourselves should however take care it does not blow us up.

WE

We have not a few of the Clergy on our side, and they are not the least discerning among that Reverend Body who would be glad to see things thus accommodated; and if they are wrong, why should they not be set to rights? As the young Clergyman, being to read the Office of Baptism, which runs, "Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all Men are conceived and born in Sin"—Apprehending this, I suppose, to be absurd and false; read it thus, "Dearly beloved, forasmuch as 'tis conceived that all Men are born in Sin—A very good emendation—tho' as, one says, 'twas a good way to persuade Men to be Christened, to tell them that they had a Foulness about them, viz. Original Sin, that could not be washed away but by Baptism."

4. But there is still something else beyond all this—There are certain Tests of Truth and Error, which must
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be subscribed before you can receive Ordination ; I mean the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, which for avoiding all Ambiguities is to be performed in this Form and Order of Words :

“ I N. N. do willingly and *ex animo*,
 “ subscribe, that all and every the Ar-
 “ ticles, in number Nine and Thirty,
 “ besides the Ratification, are agreeable
 “ to the Word of God”—— I am persuaded that a Person of your ingenuous Disposition would be fully convinced that the said Articles were agreeable to the Word of God, e’er you would set your Hand to them as such—— and that if you were suspicious that so small a matter as one Clause in them, was contrary to Scripture, you would withdraw your Pen, and not suffer it to perform the guilty Sign. —— I know you can’t think, without Horror, upon making Falsifications, Suppression of Divine Truth, and Prostitution of Conscience, the first Step of Admission into the Sacred Order.—— If you please therefore,

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we

we will revise them— The Title runs thus, “ Articles agreed upon by the
 “ Archbishops, and Bishops of both
 “ Provinces, and the whole Clergy,
 “ in the Convocation holden at *London*,
 “ in the Year 1562, for the *avoiding*
 “ of *Diversities of Opinions*, and for
 “ the establishing of *Consent touching*
 “ *true Religion*.”

I must own, that I am not highly
pleased with *this* method of *establishing*
of Consent touching true Religion, be-
 cause I am apprehensive that it is not
 the most proper way to avoid *Diver-*
sities of Opinions. Are the Clergy
 to this Day, notwithstanding they have
 all, and all along subscribed them, better
 agreed? Are they of one Mind yet?
 Have we had no Dispute, upon some
 of these very Articles, which were de-
 signed to hinder all Disputes? — Yes
 we have—and those maintained too
 by some of the most learned and best
 of that Order—and that very justly—
 for

for, *True Religion* can never be established by *Consent*, but by *Debate*. There is something so lazy in the Thought, that none but the Tranquil Gown would ever have hit upon it—Truth is the Reward of Application and Labour; the bold Man who dares to make her the Object of his Wishes, must not set dreaming in a Cell, but must be active and vigorous; she'll play him as many wily Tricks as a *Fox*—sometimes pursued at distance, sometimes near, then kennell'd; then again, perhaps, in full View; nor to be won at last but by a long Chace, and venturing the Neck for.

WHAT can be the Reason why the Clergy should fall upon this Method of *Articling* with their Noviciates? Should Fetters be clapt upon the Mind? or should it be free to pursue its own Conclusions? Are Religion and Truth two different things, that if Truth should come out, Religion must fail? and how shall

shall Truth appear but by Disquisition, Parley and Dispute? What matter to them on which side she is found?—be she but found—Are not all Mankind as much concerned in her as they? Why then these Hedges and Inclosures, where every Man has *right of Common*?

SUCH Practices not only hinder the Propagation of Truth, but are the Causes of vile Prevarications and Hypocrisy—Men that come into the Church, unless their Sentiments are conformable to those of the Articles, which by the Writings of the Clergy, and the Turn of the Age, seem to be very few in number, must be guilty of such Dishonesty, as a Man of Probity would blush to mention.

STRANGE! that the first step of a Preacher and Inquirer after Truth should be to sign, in his own Apprehension, a rank Falshood— Thus under pretence of guarding and securing true
Re-

Religion, a Practice hath been introduced, which puts Religion to an open Shame, and blurs the Face of Truth—The Clergy are at length catch'd in their own Toils, they have shackled themselves; they can't refuse, if they will undertake the Office, nor defend it when they have done—I don't speak of the unthinking and illiterate part of them—but of the Men of Sense and Learning—The former perform Subscription without any Guilt, because they know no better—They never think for themselves, the Articles therefore are to them a very good Scheme of Religion.

BUT are all the Men of Sense and Learning among the Clergy, *Athanasians*? And who but such can honestly put their hands to the *first, second, fifth* and *eighth* Articles? How few think this Proposition true, that *Original Sin is the Fault and Corruption of every Man that naturally is engender'd of the Offspring*

spring of Adam, whereby Man is very far gone from Original Righteousness, and is of his own Nature inclined to Evil, &c. and therefore in every Person born into this World, it deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation? tho' all subscribe it as Truth—How small is the Number among them that believe, That the Condition of Man, after the Fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural Strength and good Works, to Faith and calling upon God? Of how many is it the Persuasion, That Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, &c. but have the Nature of Sin?

OR, are the Clergy now-a-days of Calvinistical Principles, according to the meaning of the seventeenth Article? Yet they own these as Truths—What can the Laity think, but that these Persons (who with so much Ease and Quiet-

Quietness, solemnly profess Propositions true, which they are convinced are false, merely for the sake of the Preferment of the Church) would, for the sake of greater Gains, subscribe to any other Thirty Nine Propositions you can bring them ?

As to you, Sir, if you can with a safe Conscience perform this part, do it in God's Name. If in your Apprehension they are true, in the plain and fair meaning of the Words, without racking and torturing the perverse Sense to force it to speak your own, you may do it very honestly, and without a Crime.

BUT if you are drove to the necessity of making use of Artifice, Quibbling, Palliation, and Wire-drawing, let it entirely alone, be not partaker of these Men's Sins — Conclude it dishonest to seek for any further Reasons to subscribe the Articles, but the Reason-

Reasonableness of the Articles themselves— For 'tis certain, that he who begins with a Lye, may be sent by the Father of Lyes; but he cannot be thought to enter in by the Door, who prevaricates in the first Word that he says, in order to his Admittance.

5. BUT in the next place, if after Inquiry you may frankly approve of, and embrace the Tenets and Doctrines of the Church of *England*, and look upon the Arguments which the Libertinism of the Age hath contributed to furnish against her Purity, as frivolous and inconclusive— and therefore are desirous to offer your self to the Approbation of your Superiors to be invested with that Dignity— Tho' you have got over these Difficulties, may there not be some still lurking behind, which may give you equal perplexity? For tho' you approve this Set of Propositions now, whilst you are young— are you sure that more mature Reflexion and
Extent

Extent of Reading may not alter your Sentiments upon this Head—If you come only thus far to be once doubtful of the Truth of them, can you suffer your self to renew your Subscription?—Yet this must be done upon every fresh Acquisition of Benefice. But hold! I have mentioned the word Benefice—which makes me recollect, that to the best of my knowledge, you are not acquainted yet with any Person in whose power it is to confer one upon you—You have no interest with my Lord Chancellor, or any of the Bishops or Dignitaries of the Church—You can only propose therefore to serve in the first place as a Curate, till your Merit shall cause you to be taken notice of, and raise you higher.

You little know, my young Friend, what a small pretence Merit hath in the World to its good Graces—You had much better place your hopes upon some other Qualification—Had you the Volubility of Tongue, good hard Features, not soon disorder'd; could

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you

you be a staunch Party-man, vent and defend these Notions in all Places, publick or private, in *Coffee-Houses* and *Taverns*, before any body, properly or improperly, no matter which; could you mount a Pulpit without any Sense of the Audience, stand erect, and thunder out an Orthodox Discourse, not a rush whether Sense or Nonsense; or, could you rail loudly against any worthy eminent Divine, who had unluckily dropt more Truth than he should, you might soon raise Friends; this Conduct would soon get you a Living, or a Lectureship at the least, in the City—or a Scarf, perhaps, at t'other end of the Town.

BUT only Merit, bashful Merit to befriend you, is the worst Friend in the World—How long may you trudge thro' thick and thin to Burials and Christenings, before any body becomes sensible of your Capacity to adorn a much higher Station?—Then as Curate of a Parish you must expect to undergo
many

many things which you won't find very agreeable—If an old Woman has the Tooth-ach, and can't sleep a Nights, you are sent for in as much haste, as if she was departing that Moment, to pray by her. If a Child is a little out of order, you are called for at Midnight to baptize it, lest it should go into the other World without a Name—

WHEN you come among the merry Gossips, if you can't hear with patience their idle tittle-tattle, tell broad Tales, talk pretty plainly of you know what—kiss every Toothless Dame, down to the very Nurse ; you'll never gain any Reputation in your Parish.

IF at any of these Places there are any Perquisites, or Vales to be got—your Master steps in before you, and condescends to do the Duty himself ; but gives you the Liberty to go every where, when he knows your Labour will be rewarded with Pains.

IF he has any other Church any where else, he will do you the honour of sending you to preach for him, when he pleases to have nothing to do ; and tho' he hath, perhaps, a Guinea a Sermon, you must not expect a Six-penny piece of it.— If you are a better Preacher than he, you'll raise his Envy— It will be no small Crime to please the Parish better than himself— You'll quickly find he'll begin to look cold upon you— You won't be sent for so often to smoak a Pipe, drink Ale, and play at Back-gammon with him. If you should therefore have the courage to undertake this Business, and should be placed in such a Post as this, remember to conceal your good Parts ; be, if you can, some degrees more dull than your Superior, fish out his Sentiments, and whether consistent or not, besure profess the same ; imitate him in all things, especially in his Diversions— Take great care never to show your Learning ; let all such heathenish things as

Latin

Latin and *Greek* be put far away from you; not the least mention of the *Classick* Authors, for your Life—By these prudent Means, you may, perhaps, in time, arrive to be as considerable a Person in the Parish as the Doctor's Man.

You must never imagine, that because you are both of the same Order, and vested with the same Power, therefore you are his Equal. He considers you as his Journey-man—You are hired to read Prayers in a Morning, when he's a-bed—To give him a comfortable Nap, when he's inclined to take one, at Church—to visit the Sick, which *Whisk* may prevent him from doing—and to stand freezing in a cold Church-yard, that he may, with the less Interruption, put the Bottle about. These Offices duly and truly perform'd, you are entitled to a Salary of, perhaps, Thirty Pounds a Year; which he'll wonder how you can consume, tho' his yearly Expences run out the Value of two Livings and a Prebendary—He'll
tell

tell you, that you have nothing in the World to do but to study, and make your self a great Man.— So you might indeed, if it were not for two Hindrances— Money to buy Books, and Time to read them— for your Thirty Pounds Exhibition may not, perchance, be near so regularly paid as his Five Hundred— And for Interruption— you may expect as much knocking at your Door, as at a Midwife's. Furnish'd with so great Conveniencies, no doubt, you'll prove an able Divine, and an excellent Scholar! Deists and Hereticks can't stand before you.

— You may wonder that your Patron proves so bad a Pay-master, when he hath so much coming in— and so may all those he hath to deal with— But a dignified Man is not kept at a small Expence. It is comprehended in the very Definition of him, that he feeds high, and gets Children as fast as Fly-blows; then— pray consider seriously, what it is to treat *four jolly Chaplains*—
then

then——there are Visits to and from the Bishop, to the Dean, to the Prebends, whose Names would make a private Gentleman's Estate sink at the very sound of them.——Lastly, consider the annual Expence of Subscriptions to the Works of the eminent Clergy——as well as what is given in *Charity* to *Ministers in Poverty and Distress*——which last two Articles, no doubt, amount to something considerable.——These things reflected on——you won't be surprized if it should be half a Year before you receive your first quarterly Allowance.

GIVE me leave to observe to you likewise——that in such a Situation as this, you must not expect to be treated with much Ceremony; nor take upon you to be very free of your Tongue; or pretend to be out of humour, if you are interrupted——This is your Birth-right as a Curate——Be your Sentiments ever so just, your Words ever so proper, your Behaviour ever so genteel

genteel——they are all lost and thrown away——your Condition sinks you into Contempt and Insignificancy.

AMONG Gentlemen, indeed, these Qualities will pass current——Good Breeding and Politeness will render your Conversation acceptable to such. You may be easy, familiar and sprightly in their Company, and relate your Wit and Humour among them with Applause——Here you'll be caressed and loved——Gentlemen don't consider a Man's Fortune, so much as his Behaviour and Abilities ; and every Man has a Title to be treated as such among them, who demeans himself like one——then Gayety of Temper, and lively Turns of Repartee are certain Passports to their Acquaintance.

BUT with your Doctor these Talents will prove useless——they are not to the Goût of the Church, he'll think them as improper as if you wore a Sword over your Cassock.——It will be insolent
in

in you to talk to him as easily as you can converse with a Man of Breeding; he must be treated with more Respect and greater Reverence. You are his Servant, and in his Thoughts, perhaps, one of the meanest about him—— and you'll find his Footman take greater Liberties with him than you dare to do.—— Therefore there's but one way left—— You must be silent, and know your Distance—— A Curate is not Company for a beneficed Man.—— When any of his Brethren of this Figure and Bulk come into the Room, you must go out of it; and that you may do without being espied, for you'll not be taken so much notice of—— If you have Philosophy enough to bear this Usage; thus to stand for a Cypher, a Drudge, a Slave; the Church-doors will be open, and you may enter upon your Post, next Ordination Sunday.

I HAD almost forgot one Circumstance—— one of the Blessings attending this Course of Life; and that is, you'll

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be delivered from the Trouble of Thinking for your self — or speaking your own Sentiments. — You must wear a Mask over your Mind, and clap a Padlock upon your Tongue. It may be any other *English*-man's native Privilege to declare the Result of his own Reflections, to profess and defend them, if he thinks he has Reason on his side — This he imagines an invaluable Happiness — and would not part with upon any consideration. — Be ever so good a Customer to a Tradesman, he'll thank you for the Money you are pleased to lay out with him — but upon an Argument he is under no restraint to conceal his Mind, but will express himself with all the Frankness of a free-born Man. — Employ a Mechanick, so that your Work almost maintains him and his Family — he confesses indeed that you're his very good Master — but try your authority with him, to make him of your Opinion — if he's not of the same before, the Fellow comes to arguing and putting
of

of Questions—— and has, you'll find, so much *English* Blood in him, that if he does not approve, you must go somewhere else to seek a Profelyte.

TRY the same Method with your Superior, and you are sent to find a new Master—— I don't speak now of Articles of Faith, but of much more indifferent Matters; such as the Discipline of the Church, Power and Authority of its Preachers; the Use and Significancy of its Ceremonies, or such like Questions.—— Profess your Mind freely, take your own side, enter into the Debate with him, the Consequence will be (unless he be of the same Principles) a *Lettre de Cachet*, next Morning, to pack up your Awls and leave his Parish; lest *the wholesome Fountain of sound Doctrine be render'd muddy by the Feculency of your damnable Positions.*

BUT I have kept you long enough upon the miserable Condition of the

servile Train of Curates—— so vile, so crouching a Dependency, what generous Man would undergo?—— Such a one would sooner chuse to dig in a Mine, for then he's a Slave under ground, and his Shame hidden from the Eyes of Men; than wear this publick, open Badge of Servitude, and go thro' such dirty ways likewise to put it on.

BUT I will suppose now, that better Fortune doth attend you, that you are soon emancipated and delivered from this Life of Bondage.—— A Bishop, if you please, shall find your Merit out, and reward it with a good fat Living, in the Country, in the first place—— of which I wish you joy.—Your Friends all around, no doubt will do the same.— You are now your own Master—you dress out with a good Gown and Cassock, a Scarf, a fine Beaver, adorned with a hallowed Rose, and appear in publick a very Doctoral Figure—you now have a warm House, the pleasant Prospect of some Glebe round it—and
all

all the Parishioners for your Tenants—
to furnish you with Corn, Wine and
Oil.

WHAT will be (think you) the first
Thoughts that arise in your Mind? I
will speak for you—*You'll want a
Curate*—you can't do all the Business
your self—it is too tiresome for your
weak Constitution—it interrupts your
Studies—or any other Excuse will
serve as well, when you have a mind
to keep one.—You'll find all your
Neighbours about you do the same,
unless their Livings are so poor, as to
oblige them to personal Service—which
they heartily lament.—What will be,
imagine you, the next Thought that
gets uppermost?—*Why another Liv-
ing*, no doubt—you'll be like the rest
of your Brethren, to besure—and what
Clergyman is there that is content with
one!—Don't they all keep Corre-
spondence with the Bishop's Secretaries,
to give them notice of the next that
drops?—Are not their poor Lord-
ships

ships dunn'd out of their Lives almost?
 Are they not perpetually upon the Spur
 to Town? Hurrying, solliciting, fa-
 tiguig themselves and their Patrons?
 Are not the Houses of our Gentry and
 Nobility, and the Palaces of our Princes
 besieged by them? Are they not so
 cunning, that tho' their Porters tell
 twenty Lyes in a breath to secure their
 Masters Persons, yet they catch them?
 Are Bailiffs half so diligent in their
 Vocation?

AND what are the Consequences of
 these *Reverend Practices*? Why, in
 the first place, no doubt, the Parish is
 very well taken care of; the People
 are sufficiently instructed, exhorted,
 admonished, reprov'd, directed and
 conducted, where the Incumbent does
 not think fit to look after it, and the
 Curate thinks himself bound to nothing
 but barely to perform Offices accord-
 ing to Agreement.

AND then, in the second place, as
 Bishop *Burnet* says, "such Incumbents
 not

“ not content to devour the Patrimony
 “ of the Church, while they feed them-
 “ selves, and not the Flock, out of it,
 “ are so scandalously hard in their Al-
 “ lowance to their Curates, as if they
 “ intended equally to starve both Cu-
 “ rate and People ; and it is to be sup-
 “ posed, that the People will think
 “ themselves under a very strict Obli-
 “ gation of Conscience to pay, reli-
 “ giously, all that is due to one, who
 “ seems to think himself under no Ob-
 “ ligation to labour for it.”

YOU will be thought a Man of very
 moderate Desires, if you sit down con-
 tented with but two Livings: two
 Livings will scarce give you title to the
 Hat of a King's Chaplain ; a Prebend
 will despise you, but a Dean won't
 know you.

YOU'LL be reckoned a Man of A-
 postolical Principles, and People will
 begin to suspect that you design to
 mind your Office more than the Be-
 nefice, the Sheep more than the Wool.

—If

—If your Resolutions should be such; not to take more Preferment, with Care of Souls, than you can in strictness answer to God and your own Conscience, you'll at best be but an obscure good Priest; a Character, which you'll find little esteemed by those who should reward it. Besides, it will be no small breach of the Rules of good Manners, to set up for greater Strictness in this point, than the rest of your Brethren.—By these means you'll be as much pointed at as honest *Will. Whiston*, and as little regarded by the Clergy.—Pray look into the List of Court Chaplains, of Cathedral Men, and of Sons-in-Law to Bishops; see what Loads! What Accumulation of Preferments! How they are oppressed, and bend beneath the Weight of spiritual Mammon! A Living in Town, a Living cross the Water; a Living in Country, an Arch-Deaconry, and fifty things besides.—Consult the Newspapers, who run away with all the Fleeces? Who troll so reverendly along
in

In Chariots to Churches? Who have the liberty to preach or sleep, just as they please for several Hundreds a Year?

OBSERVE likewise the Policy of these Men——Get all you can in your Clutches, hold fast what you have, and let not an Inch go——but for an Ell.—Thus you grow considerable at Court——for it may want some of the smallest Pieces you possess to serve a young Friend with, which is easily parted with upon better Conditions; thus Doctor you become a Dean——which you may keep with the rest till something else is required upon much better Terms, and so you clap a Mitre to your Coach.—And here the Progress shall stop for some time.

I AM very much afraid therefore, that considering the number of the Offenders, the Corruption of the Times, and Prevalency of this Vice, that you will be drawn in with the multitude to Sin——to the Dishonour of Christ, and the Reproach of his Church.

G

THIS

THIS Avarice of the Clergy is now grown so insatiable, so scandalously notorious, that no Man can be at all surpriz'd, the Office it self should suffer by it—How natural are the Reflections which Bishop *Burnet* relates to have heard in Conversation, from several Persons upon this Topick——“ Who owned to him, “ that nothing promoted this (a Disbelief of sacred Matters, and a profane Contempt of them) as the very bad Opinion which they took up of all Clergymen of all sides. They did not see in them, that Strictness of Life, that Contempt of the World, that Zeal and Meekness, Humility and Charity; that Diligence and Earnestness, with relation to the great Truths of the Christian Religion, which they reckon'd they would most certainly have, if they themselves firmly believed it: Therefore they concluded, that those, whose Business it was, more strictly to inquire into the Truth of their Religion, knew that “ it

" it was not so certain, as they them-
 " selves, for other Ends, endeavour'd
 " to make the World believe it was.
 " And that, tho' for carrying on of
 " their own Authority or Fortunes,
 " which in one word they call their
 " Trade, they seemed to be very posi-
 " tive in affirming the Truth of their
 " Doctrines, yet they in their own
 " Hearts did not believe it, since they
 " lived so little suitable to it, and
 " were so much set on raising them-
 " selves by it."

How exactly do such Political Priests
 tally with their Brethren of Jewish Ex-
 traction, of whom *Isaiah* doth not
 speak with much Reverence when he
 calls them, *Watchmen which were blind,*
ignorant, dumb Dogs, that could not
bark: sleeping, lying down, and loving
to slumber. Yet these lazy Sparks were
 as covetous and insatiable, as the very
 best among us, for they were greedy
Dogs, which could never have enough:
Shepherds they were that could not

understand. They could with the utmost Resignation, dispense with the Performance of their Duty, but would not part with the Tithe of a Hair of their Dues, so scrupulously nice were they in that point: *They all look'd to their own way, every one to his own gain from every quarter.*

THERE is nothing that generally gives greater offence to good People, than a debauch'd and profligate Clergyman—It is shocking to meet such a one in his Habit at Midnight, reeling along the Streets, or picking up the Common Women; but even such a one, vicious as he is, has more to plead in his behalf, in diminution of his Crime, than the Reverend Doctor, who from the Height of his Preferment, surveys, with Spiritual Pride, the walking multitude, from under the Penthouse of his broad Hat.

THE one, perhaps, is a poor Curate, with Allowance scarce sufficient to keep
Body

Body and Soul together, and is just come from an Alehouse, where the Liquor hath proved too strong for his Head, because he is seldom used to any thing better than small Beer. If such a one should drink too largely sometimes, where's the wonder? It keeps him warm, and raises him, for the present, above his Miseries— He would live in a more reputable, elegant manner, and not sculk into every blind Corner, did not the other run away with as much as would maintain five such handsomly— One's Vices are committed in private, in the Night, and known to few; the other blazes abroad, and triumphs in his Iniquities.— This poor Wretch labours like a Dray-Horse, and is starved for his pains— whilst t'other sleeps in his Stall, and is guilty of the worst kind of Sacrilege.— One does much for nothing, and t'other does nothing for a great deal— which is the most worthy Creature of the two? For my part, I think the poor Curate— his Piccadillo's hurt only himself, and if rightly consider'd,

sider'd, will appear to be but slight Offences, compared to those of that Man who robs the Church of its Patri-mony, defrauds the Sheep of their Pasture, and leaves Thousands of Souls to second-hand, hired Instructors, which he half starves into the bargain.

I AM surpris'd that we have not more Remonstrances against such Reverend Iniquity — That the Curates, and younger unbeneficed Clergy don't reclaim against such preposterous Practices. — Suppose they were to make a joint Concern of it — go up in a Body to the House of Commons, and present their Petition, with a List of those worthy Gentlemen who are thus laden with thick Clay — Who knows but the Justice of the Nation might take this Affair into consideration? Might they not resume some former Grants from the Crown, and increase poor Livings with the Superfluities of Pluralists, and Non-Residents? Or might they not lay a Tax upon such, which
may

may be applied towards the Maintenance of such a Number of poor, married, beggar'd Priests, as this Nation abounds with? Or, towards building an Hospital for the Reception of ancient founder'd Curates, who are worn down to the Stumps in the Service of a worthless Rector, and an ungrateful Parish? altho' they are generally as good Men, Christians, Scholars and Subjects.

AND now, if you please to take the last step, to rise from being a Tyrant over a few Curates and Prebends, to be one over a whole Diocese—you shall now, like those who lived in the last Age, and those who will possess the same Dignity in the next (for I can't think that there are any such in being at present) be rarely found in your Diocese, or at Church—but at the Houses of our Chief Ministers, and in Senates—where it shall be more your Business to speech it in defence of their Measures, than the Advance-

vancement of Religion : To be constant at the Levée of great Men, than attend the Affairs of your Clergy : To be taking Rules for your Conduct in the House, than studying to give Charges to others out of it.— All shall be swallowed up in Politicks ; Fathers and Councils shall now be forgotten, the Church guarded by the Sword, and Christ's Kingdom be of this World.

You shall now hold as much Preferment as you please — a Bishoprick — a Mastership ; a special good Living *in Commendam* ; with Thousands in your Pockets—shall be too little for you.— Should your Diocese be some Hundreds of Miles off the Capital, there will be no great necessity that you should repair to it ; your Agent shall receive your Money, and you shall have it punctually paid in *London*, without the least Trouble, or Fatigue to your Episcopal Dignity.— Tho' I
have

have met with a Writ full of odd Contents, directed to a Bishop of this kind, which I shall take the trouble of transcribing—merely to show the Nation the Difference between those of ancient days, and these of modern times.— It is entitled, *A Writ to the Bishop of H. to attend his Flock; and if he does not, to seize his Temporalities* — it runs thus in *Latin*.

* *R E X* Episcopo Hereford' (haud venerabili Patri, &c.) Salutem. Pastores Gregibus præponuntur, ut diei noctisque vigilias exercendo oves famelicas in fertilitatis Pascua introducant; Errantes vero per verbum salutis, & verber' correctionis in unius ovilis indissolubilem unitatem conservare studeant. Sed sunt nonnulli (Epi) qui hanc Doctrinam dampnabiliter contemnentes, & sua ab aliis Pecora distinguere nescientes Lac, & Lanam tollunt, qualiter Dominicus Grex

* See Bohun's English Lawyer, Page 311.

alatur non curantes, temporalia rapiunt, & quis in Parochia sua Fame pereat, aut periclitetur in moribus, non attendunt. Qui non Pastores sed mercenarii potius dici promerentur; hoc siquidem dum hiis diebus ad disponendum de Regni nostri Præsidiis in partes Marchiae nos transferremus. In Ecclesia vestra Herefordensi (dolenter referimus nos invenisse) quam adeo invenimus Pastoris solatio destitutam, ut ne dum Episcopum, sed nec officialem haberet Vicarium aut Decanum qui quicquam spiritualitatis exercere possit in eadem. — Sed Ecclesia ipsa quæ olim (spiritualiter) deliciis fluere consuevit, & Canonicis qui ibidem nocturnis ac diurnis Officiis intendere, & opera charitatis exercere debent, eam deserentibus & longe negligentibus in Remotis stola jucunditatis exuta cecidit in terram viduitatis suæ detrimenta deplorans, nec est qui consoletur ex omnibus causis (filiis) ejus, sane dum hæc vidimus & consideramus diligenter

ligenter pietatis aculeus viscera nostra
 commovit, & compassionis gladius in-
 tima cordis nostri acrius vulneravit,
 ut tantam Ecclesie Matris nostrae in-
 juriam, ulterius dissimulare non possu-
 mus, nec pertransire incorrectam; qua-
 propter vobis mandamus firmiter injun-
 gentes quatenus ad Ecclesiam vestram
 predictam occasionibus quibuscunque
 postpositis cum ea qua poteritis celeri-
 tate vos transferre curetis, commissum
 vobis in eadem cura pastoralis Officium
 personaliter Executur, &c. Alioqui
 scire vos volumus pro constanti, quod si
 istuc facere non curaveritis, bona tem-
 poralia & omnia quae ad Baroniam ip-
 sius Ecclesie pertinent, quae donatione
 constat eidem fuisse collata, & quae
 haecenus colligi & salvo custodiri
 praecipimus in commodum & utilitatem
 ipsius Ecclesie convertenda cessante jam
 causa, in manu nostra totaliter capia-
 mus, nec ulterius sustinebimus quod
 Temporalia metat, qui Spiritualia, ad
 quae ex Officii sui debito tenetur, irre-
 veren-

*verenter subtrahere non formidat, aut
quod emolumenta percipiat qui incum-
bentia ejusdem onera subire recusat.
Teste Rege apud Heref. primo die Junii
Anno Regni sui quadragesimo octavo.*

Which is thus render'd in *English*,

‘ THE King to the Bishop of Here-
‘ ford, (he seems no venerable Father
‘ in *Christ*) *Greeting*—*Shepherds* are
‘ set over their Flocks, that by watch-
‘ ing over them Night and Day, they
‘ may take care the hungry Sheep
‘ have Plenty of Pasture, and by the
‘ Word of Truth, and the Rod (Staff)
‘ of Correction, endeavour to keep
‘ such as stray, under one Fold, &c.—
‘ But there are many Bishops, who
‘ *damnably contemning* this Doctrine,
‘ and not knowing their own from
‘ other Men’s Cattle, *rob* them of their
‘ *Milk* and *Wool*, they *plunder* them
‘ of their *Temporals*, not caring how
‘ the Lord’s Flock are supply’d with
‘ *Spi.*

‘ *Spirituals* ; nor do they regard who
 ‘ in their Diocese may be corrupted
 ‘ in their Morals, or perish through
 ‘ Want (Infidelity)—— These do not
 ‘ deserve the Name of *Pastors* (*Shep-*
 ‘ *herds*) but rather of *Mercenary Hire-*
 ‘ *lings*, as in the present Case, *viz.*
 ‘ When we lately came hither to order
 ‘ the Forts of our Kingdom in these
 ‘ *Borders*, we found (’tis with Grief
 ‘ we can say, *to have found!*) your
 ‘ Church of *Hereford* so destitute of
 ‘ all Pastoral Comforts, that not only
 ‘ her Bishop was *eloped*, but she had
 ‘ neither Official Vicar or Dean, who
 ‘ could exercise any Spiritual Function
 ‘ in her. Nay, the Church it self,
 ‘ which once abounded with Spiritual
 ‘ Delights, [her Canons, formerly in-
 ‘ tent on Divine Offices, and Acts of
 ‘ Piety (Charity) now strolling about
 ‘ divested of their sacred Habit, having
 ‘ deserted her] was fallen to the Ground,
 ‘ deploring the Calamities of her Wi-
 ‘ dowhood (*i. e.* the Absence of her
 ‘ Bishop)

' Bishop) nor was there any among all
 ' her Sons to comfort her. Oh God!
 ' While these Things we see, and in-
 ' tensly consider, the Dart of Piety
 ' pierces our Bowels, and the Sword
 ' of Compassion so deeply wounds our
 ' Heart, that we can no longer dis-
 ' semble the Injuries done to our
 ' Mother *Church*, nor pass them by
 ' uncorrected. Wherefore we command
 ' you, firmly injoining, that postpo-
 ' ning all other Occasions, you take
 ' care to repair with all possible Speed
 ' to your said Church, there personally
 ' to execute your Duty in the Pastoral
 ' Charge committed to you, &c. Other-
 ' wise we will have you to know for
 ' certain, that if you will not take
 ' care to do so, the *Temporal Goods*,
 ' and all that belongs to the *Barony*
 ' of that Church, which 'tis certain
 ' were conferr'd on it by Donation,
 ' and which hitherto we have com-
 ' manded to be collected, and safely
 ' to be kept, to be converted to the
 ' Profit

' Profit and Utility of that Church,
 ' *The Cause now ceasing (for which they*
 ' *were given)* we will take them in-
 ' tirely into our own hands. Nor will
 ' we any longer bear, *That he shall*
 ' *reap the Temporals, who dares so*
 ' *irreverently to substract Spirituals,*
 ' *to which he is bound, by the Duty of*
 ' *his Office, or that he shall enjoy the*
 ' *Profits, (of the Church) who refuses*
 ' *to discharge the Duty incumbent of*
 ' *the same.* Witness the King at Here-
 ' ford, &c.'

BUT notwithstanding the Care of
 this King, or the Smartness of his Writ—
 I can't but think it would be very hard,
 should any old Councils, Canons, Ca-
 pitulars, Injunctions, Constitutions, &c.
 be allowed to debar our Bishops from
 laying their Hands upon what they
 please, when they go thro' so much
 work for it— Not in their own Func-
 tion, 'tis allowed, but in Affairs of
 much greater Consequence. — Who
 now

now expects a Bishop should preach? No body; he's much better employ'd, we all know. That would be to do other Folks Office; as if the Steward of the House should execute the Porter's, or the Cook's Places.

Who can refuse them *Commendams*? No body. Indeed formerly, when there was a Living vacant, and no Clerk to serve it, the Bishop was to keep it till he found a fit Man—But is he not much wiser to keep it himself?

BUT to leave off this idle Raillery, and to wind up my Bottom seriously.

IF you look upon haranguing in a Pulpit to be preaching Christ: If you can agree to the Use of the Liturgy, in all its points: If you can subscribe to the Articles in their plain, obvious Meaning: If you can go thro' the Drudgery of a Parish, or bear the Rigour of a Rector: *i. e.* If you can
starve

starve and pray ; if you can afterwards in your turn revenge this Usage upon others : If you can in Meekness and Patience possess your Spirit, and reverently enjoy enough to maintain a Dozen Men, being sent to reap that whereon you bestowed no Labour, others labouring, and you entring into their Labours : In short, if you can make a downright modern Priest—be one.—But if you think you shall boggle, if your Conscience is squeamish, and we must have you perpetually pretending to something primitive and old-fashioned—leave off all Thoughts of this nature — for you'll be but a Scandal and Disgrace to the rest of your Brethren.

F I N I S.

...and you can all see
...this ...
...in ...
...and ...
...to ...
...to ...
...no ...
...and ...
...it ...
...—be
...—But if you think you don't ...
...is ...
...you ...
...and ...
...40058 ...
...all ...
...—for you'll be ...
...to the ... of
...your ...

W I N I S